

QUICK GUIDE: Managing Distress

What to notice; how to respond

When someone appears or behaves in a way that makes you concerned about their psychological or emotional well-being, consult this guide to action.

Signs of Distress

You might notice one serious sign or a cluster of less worrisome signs from different categories.



EMOTIONAL Irritability, anger; sadness, crying, anxiety; showing extreme reactions; expressions of disinterest, apathy, or hopelessness; suicidal comments



COGNITIVE Decline in work or academic performance; poor concentration or decision-making; out of touch with reality, odd speech.



PHYSICAL Frequent health issues; problems with sleep or eating; rapid heartbeat/jittery; disheveled appearance; social withdrawal; increased drinking or drug use

Levels of Distress



CONCERN Visible distress, personal loss or significant life event, academic difficulties, sleep or eating problems, emotional outbursts, social withdrawal



URGENT Expressions of hopelessness; talk of suicide; being out-of-touch with reality.



EMERGENCY Immediate threat of harm to self/others.

Response Options

Keep the appropriate individual or office informed.



CONCERN Talk to person directly and/or consult with a supervisor or administrator.



URGENT Get immediate assistance 24/7:

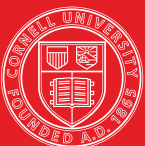
- For a student, call Gannett/CAPS (255-5155)
- For a staff or faculty member, call FSAP (1-800-327-2255) and press 1



EMERGENCY Dial 911 or call CU Police @ 255-1111

More information: www.gannett.cornell.edu/assist

General 11/4/09



Cornell University
Gannett Health Services